

(Waking up) Perspective Eckhart Tolle - The Death of the Little Me

[Speaker 2] (0:17 - 1:58)

Welcome to Waking Up. What does it really mean? A series of interviews celebrating Soundstrue's 30th anniversary.

This episode of Waking Up features prominent spiritual teacher and the author of the bestselling books *The Power of Now* and *A New Earth*, Eckhart Tolle. The conversation you're about to hear is an excerpt of an interview that I did with Eckhart Tolle about his experience of awakening that was originally broadcast on Eckhart Tolle TV and is included as part of this series on Waking Up, courtesy of Eckhart Tolle TV. Eckhart provides access to hundreds of hours of audio and video teachings from Eckhart and from his teaching partner Kim Eng.

If you'd like to receive a free trial and experience Eckhart Tolle TV for yourself, please visit EckhartTolleTV.com. My conversation with Eckhart Tolle began with Eckhart to describe in as much detail as possible his experience of awakening. As many people know, right at the beginning of *The Power of Now*, Eckhart devotes three paragraphs to describing the radical shift he underwent at the age of 29 in London.

Only three paragraphs. If possible, I wanted more detail. So I asked.

Here's Eckhart Tolle on his experience of awakening.

[Speaker 1] (2:01 - 15:43)

Well, the background to it is several years of inner states of anxiety and depression in my 20s. And even at university, I got to university late because I didn't have any qualifications. Initially, I left school at 14.

So later in England, I got the qualifications to get into university. I was already in my early 20s and I had a full-time job at the same time. And at that time, gradually the depressions and a lot of states of high anxiety also started.

I did very well at university in my degree course and I worked very hard. I wasn't aware of that so much at the time. But later on, years later, I met somebody who was a student at the same time in a different faculty, but he observed me and he said, oh, you were always working.

You were working till midnight in the library and I couldn't believe it. And then I realized, oh yeah, I must have been working very hard. But the motivation was fear, anxiety of not doing well.

So it wasn't enjoyable. I was motivated by anxiety. And that came to a head after I graduated.

I did very well. I was happy for two or three weeks. And then the anxiety and depression came back, even worse than before.

So that night came, I was living in a little bedsitter, as they call it in England, in London. I had finished my university course. I didn't know what to do next.

And that night, I woke up again in the night with a very active mind. But at that moment, of course, I was my mind. I didn't know that there was an active mind, because I was the thought processes that kept me awake and were telling me how many reasons I had to be in a state of fear, the uncertainty of future, what am I going to live on?

Am I going to make it? And so on. Unhappiness with who I was as a person, inadequacy, and so on.

So there was this incessant mind activity that during that night again, creating enormous amount of anxiety to the point of breathlessness. And feeling completely cut off from the outside world, meaning alien, it seemed alien. When I remember looking at objects in the room, they seemed completely alien to me.

It's only later, years later, I read a novel. I don't remember much of it, but a similar feeling was described there, and I recognized it. It was by Jean-Paul Sartre.

And the novel was called *La Nausee*, nausea, existential anguish, and so that was how I experienced it. So intense unhappiness and fear, and then the thought came as I was lying in bed, that the burden of living was too much. I didn't want to do it anymore.

I can't, and so the thought arose, I can't live with myself any longer. That thought repeated itself a few times, and then the moment came when I became aware of that thought as a thought. And the thought then said, is that I can't live with myself?

What does that mean? There must be two of myself here, because if I can't live with myself, who am I and who is the self? There was a sudden, I was looking at that statement that my mind had created, I can't live with myself, and I saw the strangeness of it.

I had separated myself in two, and so I saw who am I and who is the self? And that question, that was the last thought, the last significant thought before the awakening experience, this last significant thought posed a question, and that question was, who am I and who is that self that I can't live with? Is there one or two here?

Am I one or two? That was the last thought. And the answer to that question did not come as a thought.

The answer to that question, I didn't know at the time, by the way, that this is what was happening, but I can explain it now. I couldn't have explained it then. The answer to that question came not as a thought, but as an inner stepping back from thought, an inner disidentification from thought.

And so I suddenly realized, but not through analytical thinking, that that self that I couldn't live with had no actual reality. That was the unhappy self. So its illusory nature was recognized, but not through thinking, not through thinking this, the self is really illusory.

No, the illusory nature was recognized as an indirect recognition beyond thought. I could see that it is nothing, but without saying that mentally. So am I one or two?

The last question led to a disidentification from the me, the unhappy me, the whole sense of self that was burdened with unhappiness and fear and anxiety and inadequacy and so on. So that self kind of dissolved, because I must have withdrawn completely my identification with it. So I stepped out of the mind created self.

And what remained was myself as consciousness, but not as the unhappy me. And so the unhappy me began to get shaky. And then something happened to it, it must have, in its final stages, I think there was again, I felt almost disappearing into some black hole.

Because it was a kind of death experience. It was the death of the unhappy me. And so the perception of that, it wasn't so much visual as of more like a feeling that I was disappearing into some hole.

And there was still some fear left there, anxiety of what's happening to me. And then but I heard a voice, again, not as an audible voice, but more as a realization, don't resist, or resist nothing, I think it said. And so I just let go.

And then a kind of void opened, but not a visual one. And I don't remember much else, I must have gone to sleep soon after that. So there was the, am I one or two was the question that arose.

I can't live with myself, that question brought about a separate an inner separation between the mind created self and the consciousness that create that had identified with it, that was fueling it. So the consciousness that had created this dreamlike figure or self stepped out of it. And so I realized, yes, I was to the self and I, but only one was real.

And so the consciousness that I am, was real, and the unreal was no longer being sustained by my identification with it. I'm explaining it now. But I couldn't have explained it then.

It just happened. It took several years, I don't know how many, maybe at least seven or

eight years before I could have explained it in the way in which I'm explaining it now. And the next morning I awoke, at first I didn't even remember that what happened in the night.

So my eyes opened and the first impression was of everything being fresh and new around me, or it was the old familiar room. Everything felt alive. Everything was amazing.

And even simple objects, their very presence was lovely to look at. The light coming through the curtains, it I knew it was alive. And, and most important of all, and a deep sense of peace inside.

So I was looking at everything through the peace. And I thought, wow, it's wonderful. And I picked some things up and looked as if I'd been born into this world for the first time.

And of course, I can give an additional explanation now, which I couldn't have done then. I wasn't bringing the past into my sense perceptions. There was just the sense perception.

Without the labeling of the sense perception, there was just a peaceful background to it. And that's, I wasn't calling it anything. It wasn't the old familiar objects in the room.

Because the old familiar self wasn't there anymore. There was only consciousness there, the field of consciousness. And that day, I took a bus and went into downtown central London.

And the same in the middle of the traffic, watching the people and then getting off the bus walking around the city. This incredible sense of peace. And I thought, well, this is amazing that today I feel so peaceful.

But then the next day, it was there still again, the peace. Then I actually got a notebook. And I wrote, I wrote down, something important has happened to me, but I don't know what it is.

But I'm just going to write down these things, because I might lose it again and forget about it. Forget what happened. I haven't, by the way, I haven't looked at that notebook in a long, long, long time.

So I don't know exactly what I wrote there.

[Speaker 2] (15:43 - 15:45)

But you still have it.

[Speaker 1] (15:45 - 15:45)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (15:45 - 15:46)

That might be curious.

[Speaker 1] (15:46 - 15:48)

I'll have a look one of these days.

[Speaker 2] (15:49 - 15:57)

Now, one thing, you were lying down during the entire experience. So when this separation of the little me and consciousness.

[Speaker 1] (15:57 - 16:02)

Yes, in bed, yes. And it was dark. Yes.

Yeah.

[Speaker 2] (16:03 - 16:39)

Now, sometimes people say that you can't describe awakening as a quote unquote, experience. And I noticed even as you recount this, there are aspects where it's hard to find the words because it wasn't being processed through that part of your, of your mind. So if it's not exactly an experience, what's happening outside of, I mean, you can't quite give a visual for it.

You can't quite say that you felt this or that. That's very curious to me.

[Speaker 1] (16:40 - 19:17)

It's a, it's not an experience as such, because an experience is something that is added to you, one could say, when you experience something, it's something new that is added to your life, we call it a life experience. But this is definitely not a life experience. And it is the opposite of something being added to you.

It's the so in that sense, it's the opposite of an experience, because instead of something being added to you, something is being removed from you. So something that before was heavy, and looked substantial, is being something dissolves rather than something being added. And it leaves behind something that, again, is not entirely new, but had been obscured before.

So it's not an adding on to and that perhaps is even for spiritual seekers, an important thing to consider, because many people are looking for some spiritual experience in as if there it were something that can be added to them. And that's not how it is. In that

sense, one could say it's a negative experience.

So all you could say, it's a loss rather than a gain. But it's a beautiful loss. But in the transitional moment of loss, it can still be painful, because it is a kind of death.

So you lose something, but what you gain is not something that comes, that just it emerges, had been there before always, your essential reality. But it's not added on. Hard to explain, I can only point.

So the important thing is not to look for an experience that, not to look for an adding on to me, because everything else is like that. One wants to have more of more experiences. That's the big minus experience, not a plus experience.

[Speaker 2] (19:20 - 20:08)

For many people in the process of awakening, integrating their physical form with vast, infinite states of being creates certain interesting experiences, challenges. Sometimes people who touch big states of openness will then find their body shaking, or that there's a sense of, wow, this is so much energy. And this physical form isn't used to that much energy running through the nervous system.

And here, your experience, or your minus experience, so complete, seemingly, such a huge restructuring. What was that like for you physically?

[Speaker 1] (20:09 - 21:55)

I don't remember anything, any kind of painful physical experience accompanying it. There was, part of the sense of peace was a much heightened sense of aliveness in the inner energy field of the body. So I felt my entire being felt more alive.

I hardly knew that, because that was part of the total experience afterwards of, not experience because it was lasting, of that vibrantly alive sense of inner peace that was there all the time. And part of that vibrantly alive sense of inner peace was the aliveness that I could feel throughout the entire body. But that was very pleasant.

It wasn't an unpleasant thing. So why it is that some people seem to experience even painful things as the energy increases, it could be that the pain or the pressure is felt where there are still blockages in the body. And it could be that with that, what happened, the surrender that night, if you call it that, may well have dissolved also all those blockages that would have been there otherwise.

But that's a, I'm guessing, I don't know the ultimate answer of why I didn't experience that.

[Speaker 2] (21:55 - 21:59)

Were you even aware of an inner body, quote unquote, before?

[Speaker 1] (22:00 - 22:14)

No. No, I was completely in the head. So there was no, I didn't feel alive, except the turmoil in the head felt a bit alive, but not a pleasant aliveness.

[Speaker 2] (22:15 - 22:23)

So what did that feeling inside your body feel like? I wonder if you can describe it for me in even greater detail.

[Speaker 1] (22:24 - 23:37)

Well, as you know, later that became part of, many years later, became part of the teaching where I'm pointing out to people that they can actually, what happened to me accidentally, that one aspect of what has happened, they can actually consciously direct their attention away from where it normally dwells in the movement of thought. And direct attention. So when you're asking me what it felt like or feels like, and my answer is to direct you or whoever is listening to this, direct them to the actual, you can actually go there right now in yourself and relive what happened there to me accidentally.

Yeah. By consciously choosing to direct attention into the inner energy field of the body. Usually I tell people to start with one part of the body, put attention into your hands.

And as we speak.

[Speaker 2] (23:38 - 23:43)

Yeah, if you can describe the feelings to me, that's what I'm curious about for you, even right now, right here.

[Speaker 1] (23:43 - 27:59)

A tingling would be going too far, although for some people, some people describe it as tingling, but it's on the way towards tingling inside. A zzzz. If I could make a sound, it doesn't have a sound, but if it were a sound, it would go zzzz.

It almost feels like a vibration. It's not quite a vibration, but it almost feels like a vibration. So very hard to put into words because language is designed to reflect objects, ultimately, whether physical objects or mental objects.

But language can't really find adequate words to talk about that which has no object to it as such. So all I can say is approximate. It's a bit like tingling.

It's a little bit like a vibration. It could even be as a warmth. Sometimes, actually, the temperature in the body sometimes increases for people as they become more aware of

what I call now the inner body.

And once you can sense the energy inside your hands, as that tingling or vibrating aliveness, very subtle perhaps only, that's fine, then it becomes easier to be aware that it's in other parts of the body too. And so it's a very pleasant way of becoming rooted more deeply within the being that you are. And also, it's a very effective way of becoming anchored in the present moment, whereas the mind is never really in the present moment.

It's always elsewhere. So you take attention away from thought into that, and then you rest in that, and you can still speak and listen. And you can even think, but you're not going to do more thinking when you fence the inner body.

You're not going to do more thinking than you actually need to do it at that moment. And it may well be that you don't need to do any thinking that moment. Maybe it's just, so that's, the inner body is part of what I now call presence, the state of presence.

So you are present with your whole body. So that kind of happened to me accidentally. And you could say, as I began to understand after years, what had happened to me accidentally, and as I began to work with people who came to me to ask questions, and then I began speaking to them, answers came.

Then that which happened to me accidentally, I became part of the teaching, and I realized this is something that you don't have to actually wait for, for you to happen to you accidentally, neither the inner body awareness, nor the surrender to whatever is, and the disidentification from thinking, all these things, you can actually do. You can, so I'm showing people a way, but a lot of the teaching comes out of that spontaneous occurrence that happened to me, so to speak. And so what happened that night, and gradually, as I began to understand it, help people with their problems, it gradually over the years became more differentiated, and became a spiritual teaching, and that took years and years, and it was an organic process.

The foundation didn't change.

[Speaker 2] (28:00 - 28:17)

Now, just to clarify one thing, are you saying that in a state of presence, when someone is present, that the inner body will always be there in some wakeful, slightly tingly, or something like that way?

[Speaker 1] (28:17 - 29:11)

Yes, an aliveness there, an entire, the presence is an entire body state. It almost seems that in presence, even things around you are more present, so it's, it really affects everything, that your body, and the moment you look at things in presence, you realize

they are alive, so it's not only you. It seems that the world around you becomes more alive, or rather you, it may not, it is not more alive, but you recognize for the first time its aliveness, and you share, you share the aliveness with the flower.

You recognize your own aliveness in the, aliveness is one word I'm using, I could use other words.

[Speaker 2] (29:11 - 29:37)

Yeah. When you started making sense, if we can say that, of your experience, having a framework for it, did the question ever occur to you, why me? This kind of sudden, very thorough awakening happens to so few people in any generation.

Did you have the thought, why me, why does this happen to me?

[Speaker 1] (29:37 - 31:39)

Never. I never had that thought, and I believe the reason for this is that I never perceived it as something that happened to me, really. When I talk about it because we're using language, it sounds as if it was something that happened to me, but that's, language works like that, otherwise I wouldn't be able to use language at all.

But if I look deeper, I'll have to say I never had the feeling that that was something that happened to me, and that is because the essence of that is the disappearance of the me, the me becoming, so we, the me, the sense of personal or separate identity, that's me, me. That sense of a form identity as the me became so weakened in that, that something was shining through then, where the me was, there was only a transparency, there was still a form, of course, to some extent, but no identification with it, and without the identification with the form, it became, the form became semi-transparent, and the entire thing that happened, if we can even call it happened, was that as the me became transparent, the consciousness came through very strongly, and it is not the me, it's the consciousness, which is formless and has nothing to do with the person.

So it only happened because the me almost disappeared, that it could happen, and for this reason, it never occurred to me to ask, why did it happen to me? I don't know if that makes sense.

[Speaker 2] (31:39 - 32:13)

It does make sense. I guess the question, though, still remains for me. This body-mind form was somehow selected by the cosmos to undergo this minus experience for, I would say, in my words, the benefit of other people.

How come it was chosen, that particular body-mind? Maybe that question didn't occur to you, but here I'm asking it now. If you were answering, just looking at this from the

outside, what would you say?

[Speaker 1] (32:13 - 32:54)

I don't know if it was chosen. It would, of course, happen to any me that recognizes its own essential nothingness, any me anywhere in the world that recognizes that essentially its sense of identity was to a large extent illusory, and then the realization is there. Why did the realization come to this particular illusory identity?

I don't know. I never actually asked myself that question. It's a mystery.

[Speaker 2] (32:55 - 33:57)

Even though you might not have asked yourself that question in the past, here in this moment, if you take a look at it, do you have any ideas about why perhaps this, I mean, Eckhart, there's plenty of people who understand everything you said about the panic, the anxiety. There's a sense that there's a little me. There's an awareness that there's two of me here, but that's where the story ends for them.

Then maybe they pray to have the kind of awakening you had, lying on the ground, face down, praying, crying, whatever, and nothing happens. They wake up the same miserable wretch the next morning, and perhaps keep reading books, become a member of Eckhart Tolle TV, or who knows what. There's something clearly unique in your particular story, in anyone's story, but rare in your story.

For you, it just goes into the mystery column?

[Speaker 1] (33:57 - 36:47)

Yes. Perhaps the form was ready through previous lifetimes, one way or another. I've never investigated past lifetimes because I lost interest in the past, but it may well be that the form was prepared for that.

And that's the reason why it happened, but that would, I would be reluctant to say that that is actually the case, because that would mean the only way you can really awaken is if you've had enough incarnations and so on. The teaching is really pointing out that virtually anybody can awaken, and not as drastically as happened here, but almost anybody can at least enter the awakening process. There's a term in Buddhism which is, I think it's called a stream enterer.

So anybody can enter the awakening process. Yes, some degree of readiness is required, but anybody who reads a book like *The Power of Now* or *New Earth* or any other spiritually powerful book that was written from a deep place of realization, anybody who reads that and is open to it and recognizes the essential truth in it, anybody who's drawn to a spiritual teaching and goes there, there is an openness there. There are still millions

of people who don't.

They wouldn't touch a spiritual book, and if they opened it, it would be totally meaningless. So I'm not talking of all those people. They obviously have to wait a little longer.

But others who are, in whom there is an openness, then the awakening process can begin. They can enter the awakening process, and that's all that's needed. And I don't see, I just cannot see myself as a chosen one.

It's something inside me that says no to that, but I may be wrong.

[Speaker 2] (36:51 - 38:02)

Now I have a slightly different question here, Eckhart, which is some people who have experienced some degree of wakefulness still seem to manifest quite a difficult time in certain areas of their life. Maybe it's in their business life, or it's in their relationship life, or it's with their physical health. And the spiritual openness that they've touched doesn't seem to translate into these other aspects of their life.

And what I'm getting at here is I'm curious if you think that spiritual awakening in and of itself, quote unquote, solves all of our problems, or if at the same time it's quite important for people to do their psychological work, focus on their physical health, concern themselves with nutrition, or do these things just naturally happen? They naturally happen. You don't have to worry about it.

[Speaker 1] (38:02 - 45:46)

Well, spiritual awakening does not immediately solve all your problems, nor does it mean that your life from then on will be free of challenges. So the challenges continue. Not that you would be likely to find yourself continuously in dysfunctional situations.

That's very unlikely when you are spiritually awake, or even relatively conscious, if not even fully awake. It's unlikely that you would find yourself for long periods of time, or most of the time, in dysfunctional or unpleasant drama situations and so on. However, challenges remain.

Life will continue to give you challenges. That's part of being here as a physical form. So there will be no end to the whatever challenges of whatever kind will come from time to time.

And so it's not that spiritual awakening removes all those things, all those challenges, but it does improve your life immeasurably, even on the outer level to a large extent, but challenges will still come. And whatever new situation you go into, there will be some new challenge that arises there, and that spiritual awakening doesn't mean that that

does not happen. What happens in spiritual awakening is, even as you are confronted with a challenge, the challenge is seen within the context of a deeper transcendent dimension.

There is a spaciousness in which the challenge is not seen as something, some gigantic thing that completely occupies your attention. It is here within the spaciousness of presence, and there is the challenge. You primarily dwell in the presence.

You don't dwell in the problem. That's why the challenge doesn't become a problem. It remains a challenge.

So you remain rooted in the transcendent dimension, and from there you do what you can, if there's anything you can do, to deal with the challenge. Also, what doesn't happen is you will never encounter situations in life that are totally satisfying. You will never encounter physical locations that are totally satisfying.

You don't encounter living situations that are totally satisfying, even relationships that are totally satisfying, or activities that are totally satisfying all the time. You never encounter that. No matter where you go and what you do, you will always find an element of unsatisfactoriness.

That's part of living in the world of form, which every form is limited. And so to believe that with spiritual realization the element of unsatisfactoriness will disappear from your external life experience, that's not the case. It remains.

But that is no longer a problem, because it is all seen from the larger context of what I sometimes call the transcendent dimension. In other words, your happiness or your sense of satisfaction is never derived from the conditions of your life. This is where people, of course, look for happiness and satisfaction before they awaken.

When they are unawakened, they look for the satisfactions in the conditions of their life. For a little while they find it here, and then for another little while they find it in some other condition, but always they find the condition does not ultimately provide happiness and satisfaction. And that eventually, that very fact, eventually produces more and more suffering, and the suffering eventually produces the awakening, so it's all fine.

But the fact is, conditions cannot give you happiness or satisfaction, because there's always something that's not quite right. And so the difference between an awakened and an unawakened, or an unconscious human being, and even a somewhat conscious human being, is that the unconscious human continuously is looking for the right conditions as some kind of prerequisite for happiness. The awakened human does no longer look for the perfect conditions in my life, because his or her happiness or satisfaction or aliveness or joy or peace, whatever you want to call it, he or she does not need to derive it anymore from the conditions of their life.

It comes from the unconditioned consciousness, the alive presence that you sense that you are, consciousness itself. This is the ultimate satisfaction, and this is the transcendent dimension of life, formless. It has nothing to do with the conditions of your life.

And then you can have a spacious relationship with the conditions of your life without clinging to conditions or becoming repelled by conditions. You can have a spacious relationship with the conditions and allow them to be the way they are at this moment as they are, in all their loveliness for a while, and in all their defectiveness with something is missing, something goes wrong within it. So life becomes, for the first time, satisfying because you're not dependent on the conditions of your life for your satisfaction or happiness, and that's the great liberation.

So it's a misperception in people to believe that once I awaken spiritually, everything is going to be just absolutely great, everything around me is going to be absolutely great. No, it's not in the nature of the world of form to be like that. It's a continuous flux, it's a continuous change, so it's not going to remain.

If it's absolutely great today, it won't be tomorrow or next year. So, and you don't need it, you don't need that. What you need is to be in touch with that which transcends all conditions.

This, I'm only putting what the Buddha already talked about very clearly also in his teachings.

[Speaker 2] (45:46 - 46:16)

So in your own life, have you not experienced after your awakening the need for something like seeing a therapist for psychological trouble about something or other, or seeing a physical coach to help you with this or that, or saying, you know, I still need these other inputs to work out things on the relative level that are still problematic. Have you ever felt like that?

[Speaker 1] (46:17 - 47:37)

No, I've never, never occurred to me that I needed to seek help for something on a psychological level. I could have sought help for my body is not, I mean, it seems perfectly fine. It's not a perfect body, it's a bit crooked here and there and it's not, but I'm okay with that.

And it doesn't cause me much trouble at all so far, eventually probably will because things decay eventually. So many people tell me you should see a physical therapist and maybe it would be helpful. But somehow, for some reason, I don't like my energy field to be invaded by someone, no matter how conscious that physical therapist may be and how wonderful work he or she does.

Somehow I have a reluctance to get my energy field invaded by that. But that's not necessarily saying that there's great wisdom in that, that's just a characteristic that's there in me.

[Speaker 2] (47:38 - 48:26)

Okay, Eckhart, I just have one final question. In talking about your awakening minus experience, there can be a sense that there's a gap between we people in the process of awakening and Eckhart Tolle's dramatic experience. But how individual do you think awakening might be?

Perhaps it will look very, very different for someone who's listening, going through the process of awakening. What do you think about that? How much has to be there?

This is what it's like, no matter who you are, what time or place, and how much is quite individual?

[Speaker 1] (48:28 - 53:00)

Probably the awakening, what happens in the awakening must be the same in every human being. But the way in which that human being then interprets what happened or the way in which he or she talks about it or thinks about it or even how he or she interprets it could vary enormously. For example, awakening could happen to somebody who is still, who is very much within the cultural context of a particular form of spirituality.

So if an awakening happens to somebody who lives in an ashram in India, it might be interpreted very differently, or somebody who is a Christian. And again, that's why you can see some people talk about the birth of Christ in me, and I suddenly, they say, I got this incredible sense of Christ entering me. This could be one way of interpreting the awakening process.

And they are not entirely wrong, because if Christ means anything, Christ is the transcendent human, Jesus becomes the Christ. The Christ has no past to it, the Christ is the transcendental reality. And even St. Paul in the New Testament said something like, I must diminish and Christ in me must grow. So it looks then as if I talk about it and somebody like that talks about it, they talk about something totally different, but fundamentally they are not. It's only when it reaches, when that which takes place in the formless is then seen from the dimension of form, it may look very different from person to person. But the fundamental disidentification from mental forms, that is the same, because it's only then that the Christ consciousness, or Buddha nature, whatever you want to call it, then suddenly is born in you.

Another way of putting it, and that's beautiful. So that's one part of the answer. The second part is then what that person does with the awakened state, how the awakened

state works in that particular human being.

And when that human being then interacts in the world with others in situations, that also varies enormously. So not everybody who awakens becomes, writes a book and becomes a formal spiritual teacher. It could be very different.

It could be that some creativity comes through you. It could be that you work with a group of people, innumerable possibilities. And again, that varies from person to person.

And also, a few personal characteristics also may remain. They're not part of, you don't have the ego anymore, so you're not identified with them. But certain traits that you had before you awakened may still be there after you awaken.

It even happened that in India, one famous spiritual teacher, he was a chain smoker before he awakened, and he was still a chain smoker after he awakened. So he died, of course, because he smoked too much. But not that he minded very much.

Yes, so there are variations on the surface, but the core is the same, I'm sure, of what happens. Deep down in you is the same, in anybody, in the awakening process.

[Speaker 2] (53:02 - 53:16)

And if our conversation has initiated a greater longing in people for a deeper level of awakening, what would you say in response to that?

[Speaker 1] (53:17 - 54:57)

Well, the longing for awakening is already part of the awakening. So if there's a longing for awakening, then the door is already there. The door is already a little bit open, because otherwise you would belong to those millions who not only have no longing, but actually would intensely dislike even the concept of awakening, or have never even heard of it.

It doesn't even enter their consciousness. So if there's a longing for awakening, then you're already touching it, and it's already beginning to happen, because the longing is there, because you're recognizing that something in what we are saying here is true. There is an immediate saying, yes.

And on some level, you can sense that there is a truth in here about the human condition and about you. And that in you, which can sense that, is that part that is already awake. And that needs to grow in you, but don't believe the mind might be telling you that you are not there at all yet.

And yet, you are listening to this, and you are going, yes. Oh, that means part of you is already awakening. So don't believe your mind, when the mind doesn't know that, because it cannot recognize, the thinking mind cannot recognize awakening.

It says, I need to awaken. It's happening already. So if you recognize that, then that would be a great help.

[Speaker 2] (54:58 - 55:00)

Wonderful. Thank you, Eckhart.

[Speaker 1] (55:00 - 55:01)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (55:05 - 56:10)

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